

From: [Loney, Natalie](#)
To: [Prince, John](#)
Subject: RE: Issues at recent CG meeting
Date: Thursday, January 27, 2022 2:26:00 PM

Thank you for understanding my perspective. Do you want to put something on the calendar?

From: Prince, John <Prince.John@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 1:50 PM
To: Loney, Natalie <Loney.Natalie@epa.gov>; Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov>; Evangelista, Pat <Evangelista.Pat@epa.gov>
Cc: Kandil, Shereen <Kandil.Shereen@epa.gov>; Tsiamis, Christos <Tsiamis.Christos@epa.gov>; Byck, Sabina <Byck.Sabina@epa.gov>; Carr, Brian <Carr.Brian@epa.gov>; Garbarini, Doug <Garbarini.Doug@epa.gov>
Subject: RE: Issues at recent CG meeting

Thank you Natalie – I raised it with Lisa at the EJ meeting because it was such a powerful (and immediate, and troubling) example of the challenges we’re faced with. I think we should convene to figure out how we can lead/cajole this CAG group toward a positive direction, as they seem to be veering off in a negative one. We should also to make sure Pat and Mary understand some of the dynamics of what happened Tuesday. It’s hard to parse it from just reading the emails. So maybe the first meeting is just for unpacking where we’re at.

From: Loney, Natalie <Loney.Natalie@epa.gov>
Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 1:38 PM
To: Mears, Mary <Mears.Mary@epa.gov>; Evangelista, Pat <Evangelista.Pat@epa.gov>
Cc: Kandil, Shereen <Kandil.Shereen@epa.gov>; Tsiamis, Christos <Tsiamis.Christos@epa.gov>; Byck, Sabina <Byck.Sabina@epa.gov>; Carr, Brian <Carr.Brian@epa.gov>; Prince, John <Prince.John@epa.gov>; Garbarini, Doug <Garbarini.Doug@epa.gov>
Subject: Issues at recent CG meeting

It pains me both personally and professionally to have to bring to your attention the racially charged language shared by members of the CAG in recent e-mails.

ISSUE:

Public Housing representatives have not, in recent years, been attending CAG meetings. I have reached out to some public housing representatives and they have shared that they did not feel welcome at CAG meetings. This is their truth.

Fortunately, I was able to convince the new Red Hook West Tenants Association president Karen Blondel, to attend the 1/25 CAG meeting. Karen named Bev Watkins as her alternate and was also able to encourage other public housing reps to attend (unclear with complex they represented)

During the CAG meeting Bev Watkins shared with the CAG (among other things) that at times public housing members did not feel welcome at CAG meetings, again she was sharing the perspective of the group she represented.

Following the CAG meeting e-mails (see below) decried Bev Watkins (who they identified as white and is not a public housing tenant) as engaging in “white shaming”. The e-mails also dismissed the expressed feelings of public housing reps. These inflammatory e-mails were sent to elected officials (Nydia Velasquez, and JoAnn Simon)

CONCERNS;

This language is UNACCEPTABLE. Several CAG members have reached out to Doug Sarno and myself to share their outrage. I was offended as a community engagement professional and as a black woman, that the perspective of the POC community was invalidated; and that the ethnicity of their chosen representative was brought into question.

NEXT STEPS:

Thank you John for raising this issue at today's RA EJ workplan briefing. It is my opinion that the response to this situation should be clearly articulated in no uncertain terms and should come from senior leadership within the region. I believe this issue warrants further discussion.

From: MARGARET MAUGENEST <mmaugene@binghamton.edu>

Sent: Thursday, January 27, 2022 11:57 AM

To: doug@forumfg.com

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sabine Aronowsky <saronowsky@fifthave.org>; [REDACTED]
gowanusalliance@gmail.com; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Carr, Brian <Carr.Brian@epa.gov>;
Michelle de La Uz <mdelauz@fifthave.org>; [REDACTED] Marlene Donnelly
<studio460@msn.com>; Mike Dulong <mdulong@riverkeeper.org>; Garbarini, Doug
<Garbarini.Doug@epa.gov>; [REDACTED] Katia Kelly
<pardonmeinbrooklyn@gmail.com>; [REDACTED]
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[REDACTED] Loney, Natalie <Loney.Natalie@epa.gov>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] eric@parksloopenighbors.org; [REDACTED] Amy
Motzny <Amy@gowanuscanalconservancy.org>; Andrea Parker
<andrea@gowanuscanalconservancy.org>; Christine Petro
<christine@gowanuscanalconservancy.org>; Ashley Privett <privetac@miamioh.edu>;
[REDACTED] Chrissy Remein <cremein@riverkeeper.org>; Sainsbury, Walter
<sainsbury.walter@epa.gov>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Tsiamis, Christos <Tsiamis.Christos@epa.gov>;
sue.wolfe@corcoran.com; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Sean Downey <sdowney@hilltoppublicsolutions.com>; April B. Dubison
<April.Dubison@nationalgrid.com>; Julia Ehrman <JEhrman@council.nyc.gov>; Evangelista, Pat
<Evangelista.Pat@epa.gov>; Megan Flynn <MFlynn@council.nyc.gov>; Mugdan, Walter
<Mugdan.Walter@epa.gov>; Donna Newton <newtond@nyassembly.gov>; Prince, John
<Prince.John@epa.gov>; Joanne Simon <JoAnne@joannesimon.com>; Ben Solotaire
<bsolotaire@council.nyc.gov>; terri@thomsonstrategies.com; daniel.wiley@mail.house.gov

Subject: Re: Next Gowanus Canal CAG Meeting is Tuesday January 25 at 6:30 PM

Since you are asking people to speak from their truth, Doug, here is mine.

The white shaming at the last CAG was palpable, and it was ugly.

And you are continuing it here by asserting that EJ members were often made to feel unwelcome to the CAG. Unpacking your sentence, the CAG makes EJ reps uncomfortable. I am a member of the CAG, I have NEVER done ANYTHING to make any EJ member uncomfortable.

I am very sensitive to injustice of any kind, including racial.

It is rare that I feel comfortable at the CAG. It's a tough group, and there is a lot that's over my head. But I am doing the best that I can, and I am doing it as an UNPAID community member who lives in Gowanus. DO NOT, I repeat, DO NOT on top of that put this on me if the EJ community does not participate more. As a non-white person whose family has experienced discrimination, what I have witnessed and am now witnessing is sickening to me.

Margaret Maugenest

On Thu, Jan 27, 2022 at 11:32 AM Doug Sarno <doug@forumfg.com> wrote:

Hi all, I strongly support the notion that the CAG needs to do more to increase diversity, and as Natalie pointed out the EPA is also working hard on helping to bring that about and would welcome all efforts.

Just so that everyone understands, Bev Watkins is the person who spoke to the EJ issues and is the Alternate member on the CAG for the Red Hook West Tenants Association and was attending the CAG meeting Tuesday in that capacity. She is a CAG member. One of the main points she made was that EJ representatives were often made to feel unwelcome to the CAG. I hope everyone can pause a moment and make an effort toward both Bev and Karen Blondel who is the main member from Red Hook West TA to prove that notion wrong. The CAG has always been a platform where people speak their truth, and my experience has been that none of the members have ever been reluctant to do so.

thanks,

Doug

On Jan 27, 2022, at 10:41 AM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Hi - This is [REDACTED], member at large who runs two Red Hook businesses.

I am writing to say that I was a little surprised at the reaction many of us had to a white consultant who came to the CAG meeting the other day representing the Red Hook West Tenant Association. Someone who as far as I could tell is not a resident there. And who meant to shame us by not having many participants who were NYCHA residents.

I and many others will recall that we have had NYCHA participation in the past, but we cannot force people to attend. Attendance is voluntary, although expected for dedicated members.

It is true that we have thought about having occasional meetings in NYCHA facilities, but in the end, as long as we were meeting in person, we kept it at the one location. Instead of feeling shame and guilt because of the attacks of a white consultant, I feel a better and constructive response would be perhaps to see if we could try and generate future interest in the CAG from the NYCHA community by doing something like having some internships for young NYCHA residents to learn about what we do, and how meetings work, which would help them with their resumes, and help us in our mission of community participation and communication. Let the Tenant Associations nominate some candidates.

On Jan 27, 2022, at 8:31 AM, Doug Sarno <doug@forumfg.com> wrote:

EJ representatives were often made to feel unwelcome to the CAG. I hope everyone can pause a moment and make an effort toward both Bev and Karen Blondel who is the main member from Red Hook West TA to prove that notion wrong. The CAG has always been a platform where people speak their truth, and my experience has been that none of the members have ever been reluctant to do